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# THE TWILIGHT OF CIVILIZATION

By
JACQUES MARITAIN

*TRANSLATED BY LIONEL LANDRY*

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The lectures here translated were delivered in Paris just before the war began. The Foreword was written in New York while it still raged. The book's message is no less valid because the war is over.

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# FOREWORD

THIS book, which is now being published in English, thanks to the translation kindly prepared by Mr. Lionel Landry, is the text of a lecture given in Paris on February 8, 1939, in the Marigny Theatre, which appeared for the first time in "Les Nouvelles Lettres." Today France, victim of an unheard-of catastrophe, is a prisoner of war; her people suffer unspeakable physical and moral agony, but in this very agony they reassemble their profound strength. It is in communion with the people of France and with their struggle and hope that, in this New World where a Frenchman can still speak freely, I now repeat what I said five years ago.

If I had just written this book, I might perhaps have set down many complementary remarks. Yet I have only added the few lines necessary to bring it up to date. I think that the thoughts I expressed at that time retain their actuality as well as their truth. The vocation of France is not a thing that can be abolished even by an unprecedented military disaster, even by the moral ruin of the leading classes and of many elements of the intelligentsia. We know that the oppressed and disarmed spirit of the people and the vital and living forces of the Christian community have remained faithful to this vocation. The day that France regains her freedom, she will resume her historic mission. Our observations of five years ago contained little, but still a ray of hope; this ray of hope endures, it increases in the midst of misfortune.

*The twilight of civilization*—the pessimism of this formula was only a relative pessimism. If twilight ushers in night, night itself precedes day. And in human history it often happens that the first rays of a dawn are mingled with the

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twilight. In my mind the notion of the present trials endured by civilization was inseparable from that of a *new humanism*, which is in preparation in the present death struggle of the world, and which at the same time is preparing the renewal of civilization, even if it be only for the time that St. Paul predicts as a "resurrection from among the dead."

For the moment, civilization is plunged not only in twilight, but in a devastating hurricane. All the dangers that I pictured five years ago have suddenly taken on a single monstrous form, the form of war led by the Nazi revolution, by means of which the pagan Empire is now crushing Europe. What is of first and foremost importance to freedom and civilization at this moment is that the common effort of the United Nations win this war. The defeat of Germany will not solve all the problems of freedom to be won, of civilization to be rescued and rebuilt. But it is a necessary condition if they are to be solved and the world freed from the slavery which today threatens each and every one of us.

I am indebted to Macmillan & Co., who kindly authorized the condensation here of some pages already published in *Scholasticism and Politics*, and to the *Virginia Quarterly Review*, in which part of my lecture previously appeared (Spring, 1939) and which granted permission to reprint.

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# THE TWILIGHT OF CIVILIZATION

## I

## THE CRISIS OF MODERN HUMANISM

THE word "humanism" lends itself to many different interpretations, each of them depending, in turn, upon the notion one has of the nature of man. It might prove advisable, then, to furnish a definition here at the outset. Even though such a definition as this can itself be developed in many different directions, in order to leave all further discussion open, let us say simply that humanism tends essentially to render man more truly human and to manifest his original greatness by enabling him to partake of everything in nature and in history capable of enriching him. It requires both that man develop the latent tendencies he possesses, his creative powers and the life of reason, and that he work to transform into instruments of his liberty the forces of the physical universe, Obviously, we cannot delete from the humanistic tradition the wisdom of ancient Greece, which, in its own terms, sought to attain "that which is better than reason, being the principle itself of reason." From this, one should take warning never to define humanism in such a way as to exclude from it all that is ordained to the supra-human and forswear all considerations of transcendence.

If we take our point of view from the concrete logic of the events of history, we see that in the practical order of human life and action—not in the order of pure philosophic speculation—many positions tenable in theory

(rightly or wrongly) are quickly swept away because after a short while they appear to be *unlivable* in practice—not necessarily for a given individual, but for the common consciousness.

Here we have a glimpse into the nature of the great defect of classical humanism, the brand of humanism which, since the Renaissance, has occupied the last three centuries. This defect, it seems to me, lies not so much in that which is affirmed in this sort of humanism, as in that which consists of negation, denial, and separation; it lies in what one might call an *anthropocentric*[1] concept of man and culture. One might add that the error involved boils down to affirming human nature as closed in upon itself or absolutely self-sufficient.

In the place of an *open* human nature and of an *open* reason, which are the only true nature and the only true reason, man claims to possess a nature and a reason isolated in themselves and *shut up* in themselves, each of them exclusive of whatever is not itself. Instead of a human and rational development in continuance of the Gospel, man has sought this development from pure reason *as a substitute* for the Gospel. And for human life, for the concrete movement of history, this means real and very serious amputations. Prayer, evangelical virtues, supra-rational truths, sense of sin and of grace and of the Gospel's beatitudes, the necessity for self-sacrifice and ascetic discipline, for contemplation, for the means of the Cross—all this has been either stuck between parentheses or finally denied. In the concrete realm of human life, reason has become divorced from the suprarational.

Reason isolates itself also from all that is irrational in man or else denies it, always acting on the fallacy that

[1] I realize that this term is not particularly felicitous; I use it for want of a better term to express a concept which shuts man up in himself and separates him from Nature, Grace and God.

whatever is "irrational" in the sense of not being reducible to reason is, by this very fact, "irrational" in the sense of being anti-rational, or incompatible with reason. On the one hand, the proper life of the universe of will is disregarded. And whatever is non-rational even in the world of knowledge is also overlooked. Then, too, the whole universe of the infra-rational, of instincts, of obscure tendencies, and of the unconscious, with all its malicious and even demonic, as well as fertile, implications is also put in parentheses or chastely forgotten.

Thus we witness the gradual formation of the man of the bourgeois pharisaism in whom the nineteenth century long believed, and whom Marx, Nietzsche and Freud were to glory in unmasking. And indeed they did unmask him, but not without disfiguring man himself in the process.

At the same time, tremendous promises were made to mankind from the time of Descartes on. Automatically the progress of man's enlightenment was to produce a full happiness of leisure and rest, an earthly beatitude.

. . . . .

Well, *all this simply did not work*: the unfolding of the story—of history—has shown it clearly enough. After having put aside God in order to become self-sufficient, man loses his soul; he seeks himself in vain, turning the universe upside down in his effort to find himself again. He finds only masks, and, behind those masks, death.

And then there follows the spectacle which we are now witnessing, the *irrationalist* tidal wave. It is the awakening of a tragic opposition between life and intellect. This opposition had begun with Luther, had continued on with Rousseau. Later, however, it happened that certain phenomena of symbiosis, which I have not the time to analyse here, were produced, intermingling irrationalist and rationalist trends.

Today this opposition has cropped up again and sometimes appears in the meanest forms, for example under the form of racism or under the highly simplified form given it by those who cry "Death to intelligence." I shall return to this in a moment.

It also finds noble—and very noble—forms of expression in such thinkers, for instance, as Nietzsche, or even Kierkegaard, Karl Barth,[1] and Chestov. It is through the love of that which is the most free and most highly spiritual that these men undertake to defend man against reason. Even if the path which they follow is erroneous, it would be extremely unjust of us to confuse it with that of the servile enemies of reason, who are their foe as well as ours. Still, even here, with whatever intelligence one attacks the value of intelligence, and with whatever generosity one tries to save human values, this position definitely gives rise to what might be called a *counter-humanism.*

In the concrete existence and the effective evolution of societies, the trouble with all forms of noble or lofty counter-humanism is that inevitably men end by substituting for them the meanest forms. In the end, Nietzsche gives way to Herr Rosenberg.

It would appear here that reason has been imperilled through worship of reason, that humanism has been endangered by anthropocentric humanism, a humanism that fell short of the mark. Terrible voices are raised in man, crying, "Enough prevaricating optimism, enough illusory morality! Enough murderous idealism, idealism which denies evil and misfortune and which deprives us of the means of struggling against them. Let us return to the great spiritual fecundity of the abyss, of the absurd, and

[1] As a matter of fact, the splendid attitude of Karl Barth during the present war, and the progress of his doctrine about the temporal order, are proof that the "counter-humanism" of his theology is now balanced by more humanistic conceptions.

of the ethics of despair!" Poor Nietzsche! The really terrible voice, the fatal voice is not that of Nietzsche. It is the voice of that base and mediocre multitude, the very baseness, the mediocrity and the disgrace of which seem indeed to be apocalyptic signs; of that multitude which hurls out to the four corners of space, under the form of the cult of race and blood or under the form of the cult of war, the gospel of the hatred of reason.

When love and sanctity fail to transfigure the condition of mankind or to change slaves into sons of God, the Law claims many victims. Nietzsche could not endure the sight of the lame and halt of Christianity: even more than Goethe, he revolted against the Cross. He dreamt of a dionysiac superman—who was to remain only a figment of the imagination. Dionysius?—The newspapers and the radio bring us news of him each morning. They have shown us how he leads his dance through the concentration camps, through the new ghettoes where millions of Jews and political suspects are condemned to lingering death, through the disembowelled cities of China and Spain, and now through a Europe delivered up to murder and starvation, oppression and enslavement, through a world set ablaze by war. Nietzsche did not grasp that man has no choice except between two roads: the road to Calvary and the road to the slaughter-house. The irrationalist tidal wave is in reality the tragic catastrophe of rationalist humanism. It reacts against the type of humanism characterized by a reason closed upon itself, but in so doing it subjects man to the influence of forces from below, it shuts off still further communications from above and alienates man from the spirit which liberates; it walls the creature up in the abyss of animal vitality.

On the other hand there is the spectacle of a continuance, an aggravation and exasperation of anthropo-

centric humanism in the direction in which it had pointed from the very start, the direction of rationalistic hopes, constituted no longer in mere speculative religion, but in a lived religion.

This sums up all the consequences of the principle that *man alone, and by himself alone, works out his salvation.*

The pure case which we are facing here is Marxism. While turning Hegelianism upside down, Marx nevertheless remained a rationalist to the point of averring that the proper movement of matter is a *dialectical* movement. In this Marxist materialism, it is not irrational instinct or biological mysticism but reason itself which decapitates reason.

Man alone, it is claimed, man alone and by himself alone, achieves his destiny and works out his salvation. It follows that this destiny is merely and exclusively *temporal* and this salvation is of course achieved *without God*, since man is truly alone and acts by himself alone, only if God does not exist. It is achieved even *against God*, since it is achieved against everything in man and in human society which bears a likeness to God; that is to say, a likeness to what they would call alienation or heteronomy. This salvation requires the organization of the human race into one body the supreme destiny of which is not to see God but to gain sovereign domination of history. It is a position which still styles itself humanistic, but which is radically atheistic, and which, by that very fact, actually destroys the humanism which it professes in theory. The manner in which the revolutionary materialistic dialectic has imposed itself in Russia is enough to edify us on this score. Whatever may have been the achievements of Soviet Russia—more powerful indeed than the world previously believed—Communism itself, as a doctrine and a way of life, is situated in the lines of develop-

ment of rationalistic humanism, but as a spiritual catastrophe thereof.

Finally there is a position as far removed from anthropocentric humanism as it is from anti-humanist irrationalism. It is the Christian humanist position, according to which the misfortune of classical humanism did not consist in having been humanism, but in having been anthropocentric; did not consist in having trusted reason, but in having isolated reason and caused it to dry up at its well-springs; did not consist in the quest for liberty but in the trend toward the illusory myth of the City of the *individual set up as a selfish god,* instead of toward the ideal of the City of *the human person considered as the image of God.*

In short, according to this point of view, the modern world has pursued good things down wrong pathways. It has thus compromised the very pursuit of the authentic human values, which we must now save by the acknowledgment of a more profound truth and by a substantial recasting of humanism.

A new humanism must assume again and lift up into a purified atmosphere all the work of the classical period. It must remake anthropology. It must discover the rehabilitation and the "dignification" of the creature not in a species of isolation, thus enclosing the creature within itself, but in an opening up of the creature to the universe of the divine and the supra-rational. And as a matter of fact such a task implies a work of sanctification of the profane and the temporal. It means the discovery of a more profound and real sense of the dignity of the human person. As a consequence, man would rediscover himself in God rediscovered, and would direct social work toward an heroic ideal of fraternal love conceived, not as a spontaneous return of sentiment to some illusory

primitive state, but as a difficult and painful conquest of the spirit, as a work of grace and virtue. Such a humanism, which considers man in the integrality of his natural and supernatural being and which sets no *a priori* limits to the descent of the divine into man, could be termed the *humanism of the Incarnation.*

In the perspectives of this integral humanism, there must be no conflict between the vertical movement toward eternal life (begun and existing here and now) and the horizontal movement through which are revealed progressively the substance and the creative forces of man in history. Nor can there be mutual exclusion of the one by the other, for these two directions must be pursued simultaneously. And the latter, the horizontal movement of historical progression, cannot be achieved well or prevented from turning to the destruction of man unless it be vitally joined to the former, the vertical movement toward eternal life; for this horizontal movement, while it has its proper and properly temporal aims, and tends by itself to better the condition of man here below, nevertheless prepares the way, within human history, for the Kingdom of God, which, for each individual person and for all humanity, is something beyond history.

## II

## THE GREAT ANTI-CHRISTIAN FORCES

SUCH appear to me to be the general traits of the dialectic of modern humanism. So long as the new humanism of which I have just spoken has not made its appearance in history, the dialectic of that other, and defective, humanism, can result only in the most redoubtable opposition and confusion. Whence the twilight of Western civilization. Considered in its immediate causes, the dusk which threatens is due to the appearance of those historical phenomena designated in their political aspect (which is not their most profound aspect) by the general name of *totalitarianism*: Communistic totalitarianism on one hand (that is, the totalitarianism of the *social community*), and, on the other, Fascist and National-Socialist totalitarianism (that is, the totalitarianism of the *political state* and that of the *racial community*).

These two opposite families of totalitarianism present striking analogies and phenomena of osmosis. There are, however, radical differences between their metaphysical principles. Considering them from this point of view, one could definitely say that in concrete existence there is in Marxism an atheism which declares that God does not exist and which makes a social idol its god; and there is in Nazism and Fascism an atheism which doubtless assumes that God exists, but which makes of God Himself an idol, since it denies, if not in words at least in deed, the nature and transcendence of God; it invokes God, but as a protective genius attached to the glory of a people or of a state, or as the dæmon of the race.

In the practical order, Russo-Communistic totalitarianism dates back the farthest and at first showed itself

to be the most active; yet, for reasons which I shall touch upon further, it is now the other two which display the most irremediable power of destruction and carry the most hopeless threat to the universe.

. . . . .

The forces in the presence of which we now find ourselves are, in principle, anti-Christian. It might be better to call them "anti-Christic," for at this point there is not so much a question of doctrinal opposition to Christianity as an existential opposition to the presence and the action of Christ in the bosom of human history. I should like to analyse briefly the spiritual and religious implications of these forces, especially of Nazi racism and Communism. It is useless to speak of Fascism from this point of view, since, for several reasons which I have not the time to elaborate, the religious or mystical dynamism of Fascism is quite weak. Because of this, too, it is difficult for Fascist state-worship not to feel, in this respect, the influence of other and more virulent forms. It has definitely been enslaved by German racism.

Let us first of all consider the principle of racism. Racism is, as I said at the outset, above all an irrationalist reaction. German racism—nourished by a most absurd pedantry (but in such cases as this the more absurd the pedantry, the greater its effectiveness)—is a pathological protestation of nature, with its brutal force surging up from the hidden depths of the nourishing earth, with its needs for euphoria and power and with that implacable rage which is capable of exalting mere instinct when spirit, betraying itself, flings itself into the abyss of animality; it is a pathological protestation against an illusorily optimistic reason and, so to speak, against a clericalism of pure reason which in the course of the nineteenth century had promised a heaven on earth but

had possessed no understanding of nature nor sense of human distress.

Thus is developed a mystical hatred of truth itself, intellectual or moral, a mystical hatred of wisdom and of all asceticism; but concomitantly there arises a sort of powerful religiosity, the religiosity inherent to the human substance in its most elemental physical fibres. God is invoked, but only by virtue of the natural desire rooted even in the fleshly vitality of man. Because of the fundamental process of reaction which I have just pointed out, this God is invoked *against* the God of the spirit, of intelligence and of love, excluding Him and hating Him. Through an extraordinary spiritual phenomenon, one believes in God and still does not know Him. The idea of God is asserted, but at the same time it is disfigured and perverted. A god which will end by identifying himself with some invincible force at work in the blood defies the God of Sinai and the God of Calvary, hurls a challenge to the transcendent Being, to HIM WHO IS and who inhabits inaccessible glory, the WORD which was in the beginning, the God of whom it has been said that He is Love. We are face to face, not with pseudo-scientific *atheism* but with a demonic *paratheism* or pseudo-theism which, if it rejects wisdom, is at the disposal of all forms of occultism and is no less anti-Christian, is even more corrupting than atheism.

Racism is existentially related to this demonic pseudo-theism, since, in its reaction against individualism and in its thirst for communion, it seeks that communion in human animality, which, once separated from the spirit, is no longer anything but a biological inferno. In the metaphysics of the social concrete, the god of the community of blood cannot but be the demon of the blood. Racist neo-paganism is thus inferior to the paganism of classical antiquity which at least had the piety of

the eternal Laws and of supreme divinity. It revives only the basest features of paganism.

The relation of atheism to Communism calls up a similar discussion. The genesis of communism in Marx is of a philosophic order, and it proceeds from the impetus received from the Hengelian Left and from Feuerbach. In the mind of Marx the idea that human work is de-humanized by the institution of private property actually followed in fact, before outdoing it in theory, upon Feuerbach's notion that the human conscience is de-humanized by the idea of God.

More profoundly, the theory of historical materialism, as Marx conceived of it, implies an absolute atheistic position, for it implies a universal process of substitution of a dialectical movement of history for all transcendent causality and for the whole universe of Christianity in general. It implies, consequently, that the world of nature and the world of humanity are a self-existing process of becoming. This idea is exclusive, by hypothesis, of all idea of divine existence.

Communism is existentially related to this atheism, for if the former reacts against individualism, if it thirsts after communion, it has nevertheless not discovered a principle superior to that of anthropocentric humanism; on the contrary it aggravates it. It seeks this communion in economic activity, in pure productivity, which, considered as the *locus proprius* and very fatherland of human activity, is no longer anything but a world of beheaded reason, of reason without God. In the metaphysics of the social concrete, the god of the industrial community can only be the demiurgic and manufacturing human reason, the titanism of industry. Thus Communism transposes the Christian communion into another and entirely temporal communion, which is to be achieved by

the abolition of all private property in the realm of human production.

Under this heading of Communism and racism, one might make a final remark. If it be true that in the dialectics of culture Communism is the final state of anthropocentric rationalism, then one can readily understand why, by virtue of the universality inherent in reason, even in reason gone mad, it claims all-embracing emancipation and sets itself against Christianity by claiming to substitute its own earthly universality for that of the mystical body of Christ. Whereas racism, on its irrational and biological basis, sets itself against Christianity by rejecting all universality and by breaking even the natural unity of mankind so as to impose on the world the hegemony of a so-called higher racial essence.

Considered in an abstract manner, as theses which are compared with each other in a dialectial discussion, the rationalistic denial of the existence of God and the irrationalist perversion of the idea of God are equally disastrous errors. But in actual fact and concrete existence we are not confronted here with two doctrines and two errors of reason: it would be a great mistake to look upon racism as an irrationalist doctrine: racism is not a doctrine of irrationalism, it is the very surging up of irrationalism as an elemental force getting rid of all doctrine, truth and rational structure. Communistic atheism is utterly dogmatic; it is an error asserting itself as truth. Racist pseudo-theism or paratheism causes any dogma or intellectual conviction to dissolve and rot. It hates and disrupts any idea and sense of truth. Thus its mad religiosity is linked with utter nihilism.

The consequence is that, in actual existence, such a process of spiritual poisoning is for human minds and human history a factor of perversion more irremediable than atheism itself. Under the false and atheistic doctrine

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which vitiates Communism, men, even misled, preserve in actual existence a notion of reason, and therefore remain able to reject one day this atheistic dogma itself, when they become aware of its falsity. Human resources available to nature are fully destroyed only in the callous Godless bigots, and the feelings for justice and human emancipation which are inherent in the humanistic trend, however distorted this trend and these feelings may be, can still endure in the minds of people and be one day restored in their true meaning. That is why a Nazi people, aiming at world conquest and domination through war, can only be cured of racial paganism by a crushing defeat of their undertakings of aggression; whereas it is possible for a communist people to be cured of materialistic atheism by some internal transformation, however hard and difficult such a process may be. Do we not now see a first glimpse of this, in the present cessation of the anti-God campaign and in the prayers for victory publicly offered by the Russian believers, and in the upsurge of that patriotic heroism which depends on historical heritage and a concrete feeling for the people's commonwealth rather than on any ideology? Thus some young Russians hoped before the present war, for a "post-revolutionary" revival of their country,[1] and the tremendous power of transformation which the present war carries within itself is giving some body to this hope.

To sum up, although Nazi racism is more irremediably destructive and constitutes simply the worst plague for our world, there is no human regeneration to be expected either from Communism or from Nazi racism. The hope we may foster for a spirtual transformation in the Russian people, and for that post-revolutionary era of which I spoke a moment ago, is not due to Communism; it is due to the deep human and religious resources which are

[1] Cf. *True Humanism*, p. 62.

inherent in this people, and which Communism could not eradicate, and to the fact that a war which upsets all human prevision is linking their fate to the fate of the free peoples and causing them to re-enter the Western commonwealth.

## III

## THE GOSPEL AND THE PAGAN EMPIRE

Is, then, western civilization faced with a desperate situation? We must be on our guard against the encouragement of professional optimists as much as the pessimism of the fatalists. It would be keeping within the bounds of truth to say that everything depends upon an immensely difficult yet not impossible effort on the part of human liberty and its spiritual as well as material energies—an effort which would have been necessary to preserve the world from war, and which is now necessary to win the war and cause a new world to emerge along with victory. The situation is not a desperate one—on condition that men and nations who know the price of liberty determine upon a task of heroic renewal and rectification.

In the first part of this essay I mentioned integral humanism, the new humanism which we may fittingly call the humanism of the Incarnation and which seems to me to be called by our historic age as the only force capable of offering a remedy against the evils from which we are suffering.

Far from limiting itself to the culture of the scholar, this humanism would have as one of its chief characteristics a deep concern for the masses, for their right to the necessary means to existence and the life of the spirit. The problem of the masses is squarely put to our period. Either, counting on the natural misery of man, you will endeavour to transform that great human reality which is termed the people into robots, kept in good working order by means of collective techniques, and into immense throngs—illusioned, standardized, poisoned with hate and

lies—of slaves who would believe themselves happy: this is the totalitarian solution. Or taking into account the energies which man receives from regions superior to him as well as the strength of his spirit, you will seek to swing open for those masses a gateway to a life and a liberty truly worthy of the human person and its calling. This is Christian humanism's solution. There is no middle ground. Concerning the social significance of such humanism, I shall limit myself to the observation that, in my opinion, it must assume the task of a profound transformation of the temporal order and must tend to substitute for a mercantile civilization, for an economy based upon the fertility of money, not a collectivistic economy, but a "personalist" civilization and economy, through which there would pass a temporal refraction of the evangelic truths.

This task is intimately linked up with a profound renewal of religious conscience. On the one hand, one of the most deep-seated vices of the modern world has been its dualism, its dissociation of the things of God from the things of the world. The latter, the appurtenances of social, economic, and political life, have been abandoned to their proper carnal law and divorced from the exigencies of the Gospel. The result is that they have become more and more unlivable. At the same time Christian morality, no longer vitalizing the social life of nations, has become, in this respect, a universe of words and formulas, not intrinsically, nor in the Church, but rather in the world, in the general public behaviour of culture. And there, in this practical behaviour of civilization, such a universe of words and formulas has found itself effectively vassalized by temporal activities which are really quite detached from Christ. This kind of disorder cannot be cured except by the renewal of the most profound energies of the religious conscience surging up into temporal existence.

On the other hand, modern civilization, which today is paying the price of a very costly past, appears to be in the process of being shoved, by the self-contradictions and fatalities by which it is torn, toward contrasting forms of misery and aggravated materialism. In order to overcome this wretched destiny there is need for an awakening of liberty and its creative forces. There is need for the energies of a spiritual and social resurrection, and these cannot be given to man by the grace of the State nor of any party pedagogy, but only by a love which fixes the centre of his life infinitely higher than the world and temporal history. In particular, the widespread paganizing of our civilization results in men's placing their hopes in strength alone and in the efficacy of hatred, at the very moment when, in the eyes of an integral humanism, only a political ideal of brotherly friendship can direct the work of true social regeneration. Whence it follows that in order to prepare a new age for the world, it is possible that at the outset martyrs be necessary to the cause of the love of neighbour. (When I wrote this I did not know that millions of men were going to perish for that neighbourly devotion which is love for one's country. And how will love now overcome hatred, in the midst of the just and inevitable revolt of the peoples of Europe against the oppressors who have made use of every kind of savage and systematic cruelty?) This also shows to what extent everything depends upon a profound renewal of the interior energies of conscience.

As a matter of fact, it is the idea of the primacy of the spiritual which here leads the discussion. When we say that Christendom must be made anew by Christian means or perish completely; that there is no good to be expected from political undertakings of violence and regimentation, or of self-styled Christian totalitarianism, animated as they are by the very spirit which is the prime source of the

evils from which civilization is suffering today; and that the persevering and patient action and the manifestation of the Christian spirit in the world are more important than the external apparatus of a Christian order: we are merely asserting that the principle of the primacy of the spiritual has to be respected even in the manner in which we shall work to bring it into existence; that the primacy of the spiritual, in other words, cannot be brought about by a negation of itself.

At the same time—and whether it be for tomorrow or the next day, for a favourable solution to the present crisis, or for a dawn to follow upon a period of darkness—it appears clear to me that, in the temporal order, an attitude which corresponds to that which has traditionally been termed the liberty of the Christian regarding both the world and the powers of the flesh is the only one which can safeguard the hope of men in the *earthly* efficacy of the Gospel and of reason.

. . . . .

In order to understand these things more clearly it is necessary to enter for a while into considerations which concern some basic concepts of Christian thought.

The Gospel condemns the world. What is meant by the world in this case is not nature; it is nature only insofar as it pretends to suffice unto itself and reject the gift of God. And what is meant is not politics, but politics only *insofar as* it claims to regulate entirely by itself alone the lives and destinies of men and to set itself apart from the truth of God Who has made man according to His own image.

Politics *thus understood and lived* has a much more profound and mysterious sense than is ordinarily believed. It tends in the last analysis to create in the bosom of humanity a collective body, which, attracting to itself all

of human substance, would claim for itself the power of achieving the divine call of man. It tends toward the Pagan Empire, as the Apocalypse describes it; and this is the Empire against which Christ took His stand. Between Christ and the Pagan Empire there is no compatibility. The Neros of old and the new Neros are constantly aware of this. They also know that Christ alone can overcome the Pagan Empire. By virtue of a dynamism which would be all-powerful, were God not more powerful still, this Empire tends to the deification of the political order and of the chief who represents it. It makes of the political the supreme rule and measure, superior both to the eternal law and to the Grace of God.

What, then, is the proper principle of the political *thus understood* and thus acted upon? One of the most intelligent theorists of National Socialism, Carl Schmitt,[1] suggests the answer in his "phenomenological" description of the concept of the political when he says that it consists essentially of the relationship "*with* the friend, *against* the enemy" and, that it is fundamental to the political community to come into existence against someone. It is the principle of ourselves "*against the other*," or of constitutive enmity. For the politics of the Pagan Empire, hatred of the enemy, within and without, on the part of the community, flows concurrently and from the same impulse as love for the community itself. This hatred is inseparably joined to such a love. It is as old as the community itself. Only in constituting itself and on the condition of its constituting itself *against* an enemy, does the political community know truly *with* whom it is aligning itself. It is in constituting itself and by constituting itself to crush *the others* that the State knows who are its faithful. It is the sovereignty of hate.

[1] Cf. Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen*, München, Duncker und Humblot, 1932.

That such is the law of the political understood in its real nature, I am not willing to concede. If Christ is the Saviour of the world, then politics, too, can be saved, that is, it can be penetrated and quickened by the grace of Christ; therefore it must not be considered rebellious in its most intimate nature to this grace, or to justice, or to love.[1] Moreover, we have only to consider to what depths of horror and baseness the self-styled political realists —those who are certain (are they not?) that Christ spoke in order to say nothing—reduce our unhappy planet in order to appreciate the political value of pagan politics and its effects on the common good of mankind.

Thus I do not think that the formulas of Carl Schmitt disclose the true essence of the political. But they do reveal to us the essence of *pagan* politics and of the foundations of the Pagan Empire, they do reveal to us what a terrible reality is the political divorced from the eternal law and from the vivifying energies of Christ, the political as the spirit of the world puts it into practice—and with what delight, what ferocity!

It is quite true that enmity, the presence of an enemy and the hate of an enemy, is at the base of political life as shown us by this horrible reality. It is quite true that for the Pagan Empire the political city has to be *against* something or someone, *against an enemy*, *against the "wicked"*, in order to constitute itself from the very start, and to know who are its faithful and who are the "good". It is true that for the political purview *thus separated* from morality and the divine law, the summit of political intelligence lies in the ability to discern the foe. It is quite true, again, that the Empire cannot attract to itself the vital forces of the tree of humanity, that mankind may

[1] And on this point I disagree with M. Pierre Klossowski who, in a remarkable study on the forces of hate (*Esprit*, Dec. 1, 1938), has also pointed out the opposition between the Gospel and politics as understood by Carl Schmitt.

bear its divine fruit in the form of the Empire, except by tending to subjugate and enslave the rest of the whole world. For in the end, man without God cannot find unity except against another. This is why the totalitarian states are carried of their own momentum into war, internal or external, by virtue of a metaphysical law much more powerful than either the will or the calculations of Statesmen. It is the mystical law and requirement of the Pagan Empire and of pagan politics, the mystical law and requirement of the spirit of the world, that hatred should subdue love and that one should really love *one's own* only to the extent that one hates *the others*. Whence it immediately follows that the unity of the State, as well as the "friendship"—what friendship!—among its members, is brought about only on a basis of collective hate, of clan hatred; but this unity demands, consequently, the throttling of the very life and rights proper to the person, and is in itself utterly incompatible with liberty.

Such is the law of the spirit of the world, in the sense in which the Gospel uses the word. The Gospel, in radical opposition to the spirit of the world, brings forth the new commandment against which the whole Pagan Empire will dash itself to destruction and from which we cannot escape. It proclaims that love has primacy over hate and that love radiates out equally to all men, since all men are children of God; since each is a person endowed with an immortal soul more valuable than the whole physical universe, a person redeemed by the blood of Christ and called to the liberty of the sons of God; and since God Himself is subsistent Love. *Deus caritas est.*

"A new commandment I give unto you": says Jesus, "That you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another."[1]

[1] John, 13, 34.

"And the second is like to this; thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."[1]

"And who is my neighbour?" asks the doctor of the law.[2] And Jesus answers him by telling him the story of the man who went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and whom robbers left half-dead on the highway. And a priest went down the same way: and seeing him passed by. In like manner also a Levite, when he was near the place and saw him, passed by. And it was a Samaritan who was moved with compassion. "Which of these three, in thy opinion, was neighbour to him that fell among the robbers?" And the Pharisee answered: "He that showed mercy to him."

"Go, and do thou in like manner," Jesus told him, showing us thereby that only our lack of pity and our lack of love keep us from recognizing in every man our neighbour.

To quote the Gospel again: "Love your enemies. . . . For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? . . . Do not even the heathens this?"[3]

Yes, even the heathens do this. Their love stops short, to give way to hate, at the frontiers of their earthly stronghold, of their temporal community of nation, race, Empire or party But the Church of Christ is not an earthly city. The Holy Ghost is not a spirit of Empire or of party, of nation or of race, of clan or of faction. And as to the political city itself, as it should be conceived in its true nature and according to Christianity—not according to the Pagan Empire—it need not, in order to constitute itself, align itself against an enemy. If it has enemies (and it has, as is well known) that is a result not of its essence but of the first sin and of the wretchedness of our nature. And in fighting these enemies, in fighting them relentlessly when this is a necessity of a just war, it must

[1] Matth., 22, 39. [2] Luke, 10, 29 sq. [3] Matth, 5, 44 sq.

still love in them the creatures of God and respect in them the dignity of the human being.

To hate evil is Christian: but to hate the person of the wrong-doer will never be Christian. "Where there is love and charity," says the Church, "there God is." Nowhere else is He to be found, unless by that presence of immensity through which He is also in stones and in demons.

I do not say that Christian civilization has been a realization of the word of the Gospel. The saints alone come near to doing this. But I do say that Christian civilization, and even what still remains to us of secularized Christian civilization, knew at least that the Christian table of values is the true table of values. And this is what the spirit of the world, or the spirit of the Pagan Empire, of the Beast denounced by Saint John—that is, the spirit of the dominion of hate—is in the act of destroying before our very eyes, and will destroy in actual fact if it is not crushed both by the force of arms and by the revolt of the soul.

The spirit of the Pagan Empire has two methods of attacking Christianity: from without and from within. Before being involved in the present war, Russian communism had undertaken openly, through direct attack against religion, to get rid of Christianity. More and more, and even during the war, Nazi racism endeavours, through every kind of pressure and every effort of internal perversion, to banish from existence everything in which a genuinely Christian value is involved. At least masks are thus thrown off. And a real service is unwittingly rendered to Christians. Herr Hitler would have preferred the other way—attacking Christianity from within. But this he could not do. In his book, *Mein Kampf*, he condemned the tactical value of a war against religion; yet today he is leading a treacherous and implacable struggle against it. Still, we sometimes wonder if he might not have set himself up as the champion of Christianity against atheism?

If the leaders of National Socialism had had the *cleverness* to protect religion, what indulgences would their great political sophistries and plots not have found among deceived believers? But the *cleverness* of which we are speaking was metaphysically impossible; and there, doubtless, is to be found the infernal grandeur of Hitlerism. For to protect religion would not have been sufficient, it would have been necessary in addition to grant a certain minimum of freedom to the word of God; and however small this minimum, it will always be too great for the Empire. And, above all, as the demon to his flame, the spirit of racism is attached to the hate of the God of Calvary and of the God of Sinai. Thus Hitler is bound to be a persecutor. Yet he has not given up his design to pervert Christianity from within. Through his allies and henchmen, and his more or less reluctant "collaborators," those people who dream of a Christian Fascism or totalitarianism and try to build up a "National Revolution" blessed by Nazism and racism, he leads the great attack from within by which even baptized souls are blinded to the Gospel and made available to the pandemonium of hatred and lies. There is no worse enemy of Christianity.

. . . . .

In a small book published a few years ago,[1] I pointed out the fault which consists in thinking of the spiritual community of the kingdom of God as if it were in itself a temporal community or an earthly city. Let us go deeper. If one reflects upon the opposition which I have just pointed out between the Pagan Empire and the Gospel, one must add that each time a Christian thinks and acts as if hate had primacy over love, or as if the Christian community were to base itself on hate—hate

[1] *Religion and Culture*, in *Essays in Order* (Sheed & Ward).

of an enemy, of the enemy of the group, of the wicked—just so much does he give way to the spirit of the Pagan Empire, to the spirit of the world. It would be naïve to be surprised at the thought that we often follow the spirit of the world rather than that of Christ. It would be more serious to hide from ourselves the fact that insofar as we thus betray the spirit of Christ, just so much do we wound Christianity and civilization itself to the heart.

I say, then, that if we believe that the true Catholicism is that of the two apostles—Pentecost had not yet taken place—who wished the fire of Heaven to descend upon the wicked, then our Catholicism is not in the spirit of Jesus, but in the spirit of the world.

"*You know of what spirit you are*," Christ answered to those who had asked him to reduce the infidels *to ashes*.

I say that if we believe that the real proof of faith in God and love of God lies, as some have claimed, not only in being ready to die for Him, but in being ready to kill for Him, then we are still following the spirit of the world instead of the spirit of Christ and we are blaspheming faith in God. For, to kill for the sake of the Empire is the supreme stamp of faith in the Pagan Empire; but the supreme token of faith in God is to give one's own life to God, not that of another. "Greater love hath no man than this," according to the words of Christ, "that a man lay down his life for his friends."[1]

But there are still other psychoses. I say that if we put the hate of any one race at the base of the idea of Christendom and the community which it implies, just so much are we perverting the notion of that community and do we conceive of Christendom itself, the temporal Christian community, in the spirit of the Pagan Empire.

In 1938 I wrote to this same effect: "That Christians can be anti-Semites is surely possible, since such cases are to

[1] John, 15, 13; Cf. Sum. Theol., II-II, 124, 3.

be found frequently enough. But that is possible for them only if they obey the spirit of the world, and not the Christian spirit."

Those who did not like the truths I then recalled will probably consent to hear what the Pope told a group of Belgian pilgrims a few months later. Commenting on the words in the canon of the Mass *Sacrificium Patriarchae nostri Abrahae*, the Sacrifice of Our father Abraham, he declared: "Note that Abraham is called our patriarch, our ancestor. Anti-Semitism is not compatible with the sublime thought and reality which are expressed in this text. That is a movement in which we Christians can have no part. . . . Spiritually we are Semites."[1] Spiritually we are Semites: no stronger word has been uttered by a Christian against anti-Semitism; and this Christian is the successor to the Apostle Peter.

When one has understood how great a triumph of the world over Christ racism represents in the human soul; when one contemplates the visible results; when one knows what depths have been reached, in the countries which have fallen victim to this scourge, by wickedness on the one hand, by contempt for the human person, by sadistic cruelty, and ferocious stupidity; and by pain and agony on the other, one is doubtless not surprised that the professional dealers in baseness and hate should offer their joyous collaboration to such festivities. But the fact that the racist state of mind can find some complicity in the souls of those who think they serve God appears in its true perspective, which is that of the agony of Jesus Christ—an agony that continues to the end of the world.

To the devils of homicidal lusts our era offers unheard-of feasts. The immense clamour which arises from the concentration camps is not perceptible to

[1] Cf. *La Croix*, Paris, September 16, 1938.

our ears, but it penetrates the hidden fibres of the life of the world; and its invisible vibration tears them to shreds.

The day on which the President of the United States asked the prayers of all men of good-will "for the unfortunate peoples in other lands who are in dire distress";[1] the day when, faced with the terrible impotence of the civilized world to save such an immense throng of persecuted innocents, the head of a state thus turned to Heaven, he showed the true dimensions of the problem which today is shaking the very conscience of peoples. Never before in the history of the world have the Jews been so universally persecuted; and never before has that persecution fallen, as it does today, upon Jew and Christian alike. It is a sign of the profound disturbance of our civilization. But let us have no fear. For a time the unjust, triumphant, can do what they please. They know themselves that this time is short. That is why they show such monstrous haste.

I have spoken of the spirit of the Pagan Empire, of the spirit of the world. Everywhere, today, it finds terrible accomplices. A tired labouring class, blasé, materialized through too much politics, a bourgeoisie which has been given up to anarchic and blind egotism, and whose moral structure is crumbling, both are defenceless against this spirit of the world. [I wrote these lines in 1939. From that time the failure of the French ruling classes has been complete and tragic; the working people, the intellectual youth, the common people of France are saving the honour of their country. I was not mistaken in going on to say:] I trust that in the face of this spirit, of the spirit of the Pagan Empire, of the spirit of brutality and hate, French Catholics are determined, with the help of God, not to bow down their hearts.

[1] *The New York Times*, Nov. 20, 1938.

Referring to certain dangers which are not illusory, the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon denounced, some years ago, the political, non-evangelical, concept of religion, which tends by itself to the dechristianization of Catholicism. He wrote: "To want a Church emptied of her treasure, divine life; a Church who would impose herself upon the faithful only through outward compulsion; who would be maintained only by means of official protection; who would assert herself exclusively by the equilibrium of the human wisdom of its organization and its government; to want all this is to dechristianize the Church herself, to continue the work of modern secularization. All this would not expand the kingdom of God, but would establish a new ecclesiastical tyranny. . . ."

"Some people," the Patriarch of Lisbon went on to say, championing the cause of Pope Pius XI, "seemed surprised at the invincible energy of this august old man who, Gospel in hand, and intrepid in faith, condemned Communism, Totalitarianism, State-Despotism, Racism, pagan Nationalism, and all the new idols of our era, which have found adorers in the regimented masses who lose their sense of dignity and freedom from the moment that they lose Christ. Those who are scandalized at the Pope's supreme condemnation of the persecuting régimes which boast of having saved Europe from Communism do not know (as the Gospel has said) of what spirit they are."[1]

No, I do not think I am making an exceedingly risky statement in saying that our soil and our soul are not ready to accept a self-styled Christianity which would no longer know of what spirit it is, which would compromise with political state-worship or with Hitlerian racism, and which would find its learned Doctors among

[1] Discourse delivered on November 18, 1938, by H. E. Cardinal Cerejeira, on the occasion of the ninth anniversary of his promotion to the Patriarchate of Lisbon. (Docum. Cathol., Dec. 20, 1938.)

the journalists of the totalitarian states; a self-styled Christianity which would base its communion on hate of a political enemy, which would count on violence and on external force rather than on grace and charity, which would despair of the soul of the people and of evangelic strength, and which would give up all thought of penetrating the temporal lives of nations.

[October 1942:—Thank God the attitude of the Catholic Church in France—despite the serious dangers to which the myth of Marshal Pétain and the religious policy of Vichy have exposed it—the behaviour of Catholic youth and Catholic common people, and especially the stand that both Catholic and Protestant leaders have taken against the shameful betrayal of human rights of which the Jews have been the victims in France, have demonstrated that such a statement was not too optimistic.]

# IV

## CHRISTIANITY AND DEMOCRACY

DURING the summer of 1938, I happened to be travelling in the United States. If the concrete conditions of political activity here are more complex and more changing than we sometimes think in France, the situation as faced by the mind of America is very clearly outlined. One of the things which struck me most deeply was the fact that not only was there a deep consciousness of the peril confronted by civilization and of the responsibilities which such a peril forces one to assume, but that America feels the necessity of revising its table of moral values and of renewing its political philosophy. That, in my opinion, is a phenomenon of capital importance. America understands that she must at one and the same time defend democracy and work out a new democracy, and that this work is not possible unless the Christian values are vitally integrated into it. I found this to be true wherever I went.

And so it happened, on the one hand, that the American Catholic bishops made a memorable statement by way of answering an urgent request of the Pope. When Pius XI asked them to promote and encourage studies in social and political philosophy, so as to "evolve a constructive programme of social action, fitted in its details to local needs, which will command the admiration and acceptance of all right-thinking men," the American bishops declared: "His Holiness calls us to the defence of our democratic government, framed in a Constitution that safeguards the inalienable rights of man. . . . To carry out the injunction of the Holy Father it is necessary that our people, from childhood to mature age, be ever better

instructed in the true nature of Christian democracy."[1] According to a remark made by Father La Farge,[2] the term Christian democracy, first used by Leo XIII, and which was to give rise to so many disputes, has thus been officially reintroduced by the American episcopacy into the Catholic vocabulary. I trust that no one will take the Bishops of the United States for *Christian Reds* because of this.

On the other hand, President Roosevelt insists, with the energy which we well know, on the fact that democracy, respect for the human person, for liberty, and for international good faith, find their soundest foundation in religion and furnish religion with its best guarantees. The message of January 4, 1939, is, from this point of view, a considerable event. Mr. Walter Lippmann, that excellent observer of political realities, sees in it a landmark in Western thought. "The message," he writes in the *New York Herald Tribune*,[3] "registers a change of ideas which is absolutely fundamental, a change not only in Mr. Roosevelt's own mind, but, and this is much more significant, in the minds of the great masses of men here and abroad, of whom he is, by virtue of his office, the most representative spokesman. The message marks the reconciliation which is now in progress, after more than a century of destructive conflict, between patriotic freedom, democracy and religion. . . . But," continues Mr. Lippmann, "that the President, who is the most influential democratic leader in the world, should recognize religion as the *source* of democracy and of international good faith is not a mere matter of words; it is a fundamental re-

[1] Pastoral letter published at the annual assembly at Washington (Oct. 12, 13, and 14, 1938) calling all American Catholics to the Catholic crusade inaugurated in November, 1938, in favour of Christian democracy. (*Documentation catholique*, Jan. 5, 1939.)

[2] Rev. John La Farge, S.J., *America*, Jan. 12, 1939.

[3] January 7, 1939.

orientation in the liberal democratic outlook upon life." And after having referred to the lucidity of the French mind and to the religious revival which has been taking place for the past several years, the American writer concludes that the message in question contains in embryo "a philosophy which formulates in outline the positive answer of the West to the forces which threaten to destroy the Western world, . . . to those forces of moral disintegration which communism, fascism and nazism inherit and exploit. . . . It contains the outline of that reconstruction in their moral philosophy which the democracies must undertake if they are to survive."

The statesmen of today, then, are bringing into political actuality this problem of a new humanism and of a new democracy which we philosophers have been attempting to solve. The word "democracy" lends itself to so many misunderstandings that from the speculative point of view it would perhaps be preferable to find a new word. But it is the usage of men and the common consciousness which fix the use of words in the practical order; and, moreover, the scorn which the partisans of absolutism attach to the word democracy is enough in every way to restore to this word fresh and vivid colour. Against the banners of servitude it is still good enough. The oppressed and tortured European peoples are sick at heart at the mistakes of their democracies, yet a new democratic faith and impulse is now spreading over Europe, especially France, and fostering the great revolt for freedom which is to come.

If it is correct to say that there will always be rightist temperaments and leftist temperaments, it is nevertheless also correct to say that political philosophy is neither rightist nor leftist; it must simply be *true*. And in times of general crisis, such as ours, it is especially necessary that

the effort of the mind transcend these worm-eaten frames of psychological or party dispositions. A political philosophy which must be called democratic in the sense that it is opposed to dictatorship and to absolutism is something much larger than that which we call the democratic parties or even the democratic form of government (though it naturally tends to the latter). It is defined by the fact that it recognizes the inalienable rights of the human person and the call of the person as such to political life; and that it sees in the people in authority, as Saint Thomas Aquinas put it, the vicars of the multitude.

For my part, I have criticized without tenderness the myths stemming from Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the homicidal errors of bourgeois individualism, which might be termed miscarried democracy. But this very fact has permitted me to understand better and to affirm with more strength that it would be a mortal error to condemn, along with the errors of the nineteenth century, the authentically human truths and aspirations to which these errors were as parasites. There is another democracy than the democracy of Rousseau, and it is to the values contained in this other democracy that many courageous men in the course of modern history, misled by some false ideology, were really aspiring. (May I add that the founders of the American democracy were guided both by a Christian philosophy of life and by the Lockian tradition much more than by the ideas of Rousseau.)

I have stated elsewhere, and at much greater length than I am able to state it here, what I think on that score. Today, I shall be content to say this.

Miscarried democracy and miscarried humanism proceeded from the anthropocentric inspiration referred to at the beginning of this essay. Materialism, atheism, anarchy bearing the mask of State-Despotism, and finally dictatorship, were their fated misfortunes.

An integral humanism and an organic democracy, the Christian-inspired democracy of which the American episcopacy spoke, proceed from a theocentric inspiration. An integral humanism and an organic democracy respect human dignity in a real fashion, not in an abstract, intemporal and unexisting individual, not in ignoring all historical conditions and differences, and sacrificing the human substance to anarchic or state-despotic myths, but in each concrete living person, as he exists in his actual relationship to the community and in the historical context of his life. Their aim is freedom of expansion for the person and they know that they will need all of human history to achieve the conquest of this freedom. They know that in the hierarchy of values, it is the development of the life of the spirit, wisdom and love which hold first place. The *principal* thing for them in political work consists not in satisfying covetousness nor yet in external domination over material nature or over other peoples; but, rather, in the slow and difficult march toward an historic ideal of fraternal friendship among the wounded children of an unhappy species made for supreme happiness. Finally, this democracy and this humanism, just as they recognize the rights of the political community and of the political common good, recognize as well, and first of all, the rights of the family and the rights of the human person. And if you ask what these inalienable rights of the individual are, I shall quote to you the words of Pius XI in the encyclical *Divini Redemptoris*: "The right to life, to the integrity of the body, to the necessary means of existence; the right to march towards one's ultimate end in the path traced by God; the right of association, the right to the possession and use of property. . . ." To which might be added: the right not to have to dedicate oneself, under penalty of death, to wearing Brown, Black, or Red; the right not to be reschooled in a concentration

camp; the right to think and to say what the methods of civilization practised by the totalitarian powers really mean to the human conscience.

The Christian religion is annexed to no temporal régime; it is compatible with all forms of legitimate government; it is not its business to determine which type of civil rule men must adopt *hic et nunc*; it imposes none on their will, nor, so long as the higher essential principles are respected, does it specify any particular system of political philosophy, no matter how general, such as that system which occupies us at the moment. But the question which arises here is of an entirely different order. It is a question of fact which concerns the seed that gradually germinates in the bosom of the profane and temporal consciousness itself, under the activation of the Christian ferment, as in the case of slavery and its progressive abolition. It is a question of knowing, besides, whether at the present moment and under the present circumstances of human history, the chances of religion, of conscience, and of civilization do not coincide with those of liberty.

But let it be well understood, it is in no way a question here of sewing new patches on old cloth. It is a radical purification which is needed. And in the realm of facts, and in the realm of historical sanctions, it is this purification which is taking place in atrocious forms under our eyes. We are witnessing the historical liquidation of the world of Jean-Jacques Rousseau and bourgeois democracy. Now a genuine, a real democracy must be built up. If in the years which preceded the second world war it appeared that in the political domain the democracies lost out at every turn, it was not only because of the errors which they were ceaselessly committing; these very errors and these very weaknesses themselves seemed inevitable every time. The fatality which worked against the modern

democracies was that of the false philosophy of life which for a century altered their authentic vital principle and which, paralysing this principle from within, caused them to lose trust in themselves. In the meantime, the totalitarian dictatorships, much better versed in Machiavelli, have confidence in their own principle of force and trickery, and they risk their all upon this. The historical trial will continue until the root of the evil has been discovered, and, at the same time, the true principle of a renewed hope and of an invincible faith.

If the Western democracies are not to be swept away, and a night of long centuries is not to come down upon civilization, it is on condition that they discover in its primitive purity their vital principle, which is justice and love, and whose source is of divine origin. It is on condition that they reconstruct their political philosophy and thus rediscover the sense of justice and heroism in the rediscovery of God.

In the evening twilight in which we stand, there are signs—the very ones to which I referred above—which lead us to think that already the uncertain rays of a dawn are beginning to show themselves. Such the prospect appeared to me seven months before the present war. In spite of all the ruins and atrocities accumulated in the world, in spite of the ordeal and the frightful sufferings of the free peoples of Europe, in spite of the defeat, betrayal and unheard-of humiliation to which France has been a victim, this war is a struggle to pass from the rays of dawn to daylight.

As concerns France, the spiritual renewal which was carried on in the pre-war years has been of great moment to the whole future of civilization. So is the development of political and social concepts founded on the value of the human person among the best sections of French youth. Now more than ever the question is to have *our*

philosophy of man and the community; *our* principle of historic vitality, *our* idea of the supreme values to which we know that the existence of man and of civilization is appendant.

It is a question of our existing, ourselves, and in our own eyes. And who can act and resist if first he does not exist? France, find yourself again, your physical and spiritual existence. . . . "*Don't lose your soul.*" Land, old land of Joan of Arc and of Péguy, old land of justice, of honour, and of liberty!

But Europe! Is it too late for Europe? In the Europe of 1939, who would have dared to hope for the possibility of a new Christendom? But Europe can no longer be considered isolated; it is not Europe alone, it is the world, it is the whole world which must now resolve the problem of civilization. It was too late for the Europe of yesterday. For the crucified Europe of today it is not too late.

The totalitarian states are not unaware of the importance of moral unanimity; they strive to attain it, but they can arrive at it only through intimidation and coercion. In the last analysis, with regard to the internal adhesion of hearts, these means are of doubtful worth.

The question now is whether the peoples of the countries which are still free are capable of attaining, by the paths of liberty and of the spirit, a sufficient moral unanimity, and whether they are capable of resisting the adulterations which threaten their very conscience from within. Each time that someone in any country cedes to some infiltration of the totalitarian spirit, under any form whatsoever, under any disguise, one battle for civilization has been lost. The question is whether or not, in the face of an unprecedented loosing of pagan violence and of all the means which draw strength from the degradation of the human being, we understand the need of going back to the

first source of spiritual energies; the need of the violence which bears away the kingdom of heaven, and which alone can elevate man's natural powers, for struggle and for suffering, to a level where they truly dominate history.

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